

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, March 9, 1908, with transcript

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL TO MABEL (Hubbard) BELL Hammondsport, N. Y.
Monday, March 9th, 1908. Mrs. A. G. Bell, 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C.
My sweet dear little wifie:

I have just come here and want to go right back. I feel nervous about you and want to be sure you are all right. Your telegram was received at Beth and I found another about Beinn Bhreagh sheep awaiting me here. I wonder whether my telegram today was understood. It was rather mixed up I must confess — even at this end of the line — and was probably further twiest before you received it.

I have not yet even seen my kites which are stored in a building up on the hills — and the members of the A.E.R. have been too busy getting Selfridge's Power-driven Flying Machine ready for an actual trial tomorrow. It is a beautiful machine substantially similar to Farmens and poor Selfridge is very anxious to try it before he goes off to the hospital in Washington. He has a slight attack of Jaundice and really should not be here at all but I sympathize with his desire to try it. He has medical care here but should go to a hospital for a time — for an attack of this kind which might mean very little to others — should be carefully looked after in the case of a man who has only one kidney. I see no reason why his machine should not do all that Farman's has done — but only wish it gave promise of actual stability. It will be 2 tried tomorrow morning on the ice — and although I do not like to see experiments made with a man on board with a machine of this kind — in which undoubtedly some risk is involved — still I do not think that anything serious could result from an accident. The machine might be injured by striking on one side or the other — and the tail might be injured — but the longitudinal stability seems to me to be sufficient to prevent it from diving to such an extent as to prevent it from striking a glancing blow on

Library of Congress

the ice — so that should the worst come to the worst — it would simply slide on the ice if it dived. I should not be surprised to see it leave the ice and fly for some distance through the air. We shall know tomorrow.

I do hope I shall have some word from you tomorrow — for both telegrams received were sent off on Friday — and I have no later news from you.

I am staying at the Curtis. Selfridge will leave tomorrow for Washington — and Casey and Douglas will come here. They have been obliged to leave their boarding place as their landlady seems to be more devoted to the juice of the Hammondsport grapes (!) than is consistent with their comfort.

Selfridge is not ill — and seems to be in fine spirits — but the appearance of Jaundice requires to be looked into — and cared for at once.

Your loving husband, Alec.